/28 cont./

262 cooked down until thick, kumachí, and the extremely "hot" ají in various forms; products of fishing, fowling, and hunting, depending on the wealth of the region and the skill and weapons of the men, who preferentially dedicate their days to this.

535 59. On a par with the intemperance of the Indians in drinking, and a consequence of it, is their fondness for dances. For all peoples the proverb was made: "From the belly comes the dance"; but among the Indians, dance and kachirí form a perfect equation; in practice the words dancers and drunks can [534] be considered synonymous. The drum, made of monkeyskin, the rué pipe, the harsh yagrumo tube, and the happy rattles of the kevei begin and end their sounds precisely at the beginning and end of the pouring of parakarí, paiuá, or any of the other 527 kinds of kachirí. When Indians are interrogated about the 535 object of their fiesta trips, with equal candor and without the 273 slightest embarrassment they will answer that they are going to dance or that they are going to get drunk. And when they do their planting they often told me that they were planting things to get drunk with, rather than thinking of their bread.

797 60. Unfortunately for the Indians, the dance, accompanied 535 by the use of alcohol or alcoholic beverages, had in the area 273 around Roroima, in the three nations grouped about this hydro- 171 graphic node (Venezuela, Brazil and British Guiana), Protestant propagandists, called Hallelujahns. The imaginative lucidity and that indefinable sensation of liberation from the material, which momentarily seem communicated by rhythmic dancing and alcohol and other drugs and infusions, were presented to the Indians by the said propagandists as a celestial illustration, liberation of the spirit and communication with the supersensible world.

This was raining on sop, since the Indians were already on their own too inclined toward drink, and that theory of the liberation of the spirit was also that of their piaches: so that the fondness for liquor was stuck into them like a clinched nail.

/31 cont./

540 remember those dancers of the twelfth century, who appeared in Artois and Flanders, whom Proodt tells us about in his book, Los Fenómenos misteriosos del Psiquismo /The Mysterious Phenomena of Psychism/, who "yielded themselves furiously to violent dances and exercises of dislocation, who asserted that they were favored with celestial visions. They would dance to the point of physical exhaustion, would fall like an inert mass, and seem to be lifeless." Why strange, then, that the Indians might not deceive themselves in the same fashion?

535 66. Dances are not organized to celebrate births, marriages, or deaths, since it is quite precluded by the extremely simple and private form of these, the restrictions imposed by the couvade with regard to the newborn and the asarakpué with regard to defunct relatives, all of these incompatible with the gluttony and imbibing in dances.

Neither are they organized as a preparation for great hunts or fishing; on the contrary, the men generally go out hunting or fishing six or eight days before them, while the women are preparing the fermented drinks.

535 527 67. The most ordinary reasons for dances are: construction of new dwellings, return from long journeys, and the simple desire of relatives to get together, since it is a fact that the Indians live very scattered, almost always only two or three families in each place. To this would have to be added the desire to make a show of wealth in food, almost the only thing which the Indians can at times show off, thus unknowingly fulfilling the caustic saying of our village people: "If he is so rich let him have dinner twice."

535 68. The most common autochthonous dances among these Indians are the tukui and the parichará; among the exotic ones, the origins of which we noted in our previous article, they perform in some regions the areruya chochimás.

535 302 In their dances the Indians customarily paint the face and the whole body with these three colors, principally: red from annatto, or achicote /sic/, white from clay or kaolin and

226 far the poison has progressed. As soon as the muddy water reaches them, the men begin beating the bundles of poison-vine on rocks, dipping them in the water from time to time, so that the juice runs into the stream, which it turns slightly milky. The women and small boys stand below and follow the poison down the stream, scooping out the fish with nets (iruí) or with their hands. When the men can be spared from the beating, they join the women and gather fish also to some extent, but more as an amusement, sometimes quite unnec- [462] essarily shooting them with arrows. As a task, the gathering is assigned to the women. New doses of poison may be beaten into the water at lower points, especially in the larger pools, if needed.

The effect of the poison becomes attenuated quickly, even a large quantity of strong poison having little or no effect a kilometer below the point where fishing is started. A few fish are killed outright, but most of them are only incapacitated, swimming in circles and belly-up, and if they are not gathered those less heavily poisoned seem to recover after a time. The poison has abso- [271] lutely no effect on humans. The Indians wade and swim in heavily poisoned water and even drink it.[120] Our own water supply was poisoned while we were in camp and no one felt the slightest ill effect.

226 The practice of poisoning fish has been bitterly attacked as shockingly 185 wasteful and as exterminating the fish. My impression is that it is not wasteful and does not lead to extermination. Indeed the latter charge is absurd when one considers that the Indians have been poisoning these streams for centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, and that fish are still abundant in them. The poison does not, as has been supposed, sterilize the stream and the short section over which all the fish are removed at any one fishing is quickly repopulated from above and below. It is true that large fish have become uncommon here, partly because the larger and rarer fish are killed off not with poison but with arrows and hooks, and partly because constant fishing prevents any individual's reaching a considerable age although it does give ample time for breeding. As for wastefulness, it must be a rare fish, indeed, that is poisoned but not gathered and eaten. Even the tiniest fish are carefully saved. Those that are lightly poisoned and escape by swimming do not appear to be permanently harmed.

226 A fish-poisoning is also a great social occasion and the stream rings with [527] laughter and chatter — a happy event that leaves no headache as do other Indian social occasions.

[252] Many of the fish gathered are immediately stewed and eaten. Any surplus [252] is sun-dried and saved for the future.
[251]

Food Preparation.

252 The Kamarakotos cook all the food that we would ordinarily cook. They do not eat raw meat, fish, or vegetables and very little is eaten raw except

120 [see footnote on p. 321 category 116 - Analysis]
[text continues on p. 137]